

**TOWN OF NORTHFIELD  
BOARD OF SELECTMEN  
Minutes of October 14, 2013**

- I. ROLL CALL.** Select Board Chair John Quinn III, Selectmen Chris Bradley, Brad Denny, Matthew Gadbois, and Kenneth W. Goslant. Also present were Town Manager Rob Lewis, Acting Clerk Ken McCann, James Dziobek (Police Chief), Peter J. DeMasi (Fire Chief), Karl Bailey (Fire Department), Tim Davis (Fire Department), Brian Elwell (Fire Department), Ramon Hudson (Fire Department), Lawton Rutter (Fire Department/Ambulance Service), Melissa Rutter (Fire Department/Ambulance Service), Titus Sable (Fire Department), Steven Tiersch (Fire Department/Ambulance Service), Chris Wade (Fire Department), Heidi Reisedorff (G & K Services), Linda Barrows, and Kathleen Lott (*Northfield News*).

Prior to the regular meeting, the Town Selectmen held a Public Hearing beginning at 6:00 p.m. for the purpose of obtaining written or oral views regarding the Town's intent to apply for a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) to be obtained by the Town of Northfield from the State of Vermont under the Vermont Community Development Program (VCDP). The proposal is to apply for \$16,500 in CDBG-DR Funds which will be used by the Town of Northfield to seek funding to hire an architectural firm to develop a plan to relocate the EMS portion of the current facility located at 31 Dog River closer and/or in adjunct with the current Fire Station at 128 Wall Street. This plan will include design for a new structure to be placed next to the fire station and to best utilize second floor space of the Fire Station for EMS services. The Town will be obligated to a 10% local match, which is \$1,650.

Manager Lewis noted that the holding of this Public Hearing is a formal requirement before the Town can apply for these planning funds. Linda Barrows asked if Norwich University (NU) has been contacted to see if any of its engineering classes could perform this service as a class project at no cost to the Town. Chair Quinn stated that a NU engineering class did provide such a plan to the Town. Manager Lewis added that the plan they submitted was cost-prohibitive. Ms. Barrows felt that hiring an architectural firm was a waste of money. Manager Lewis emphasized that hiring a professional firm would ensure that the job was done properly. In addition, grant funds would pay for ninety percent (90%) of this cost. Chair Quinn added that usage requirements need to be determined and this can be a complicated matter.

Ms. Barrows stated that when the current Fire Station was built, its second floor classroom originally was described as public friendly but later became unavailable; will this be addressed in the new study? Manager Lewis stated that the lack of an elevator (among other amenities) meant that the classroom did not meet Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards. The possibility of making the building fully ADA-compliant will be looked at by the hired architectural firm.

Chair Quinn noted that the Town is trying to streamline its departments with overlapping responsibilities. In addition, the Ambulance Services currently occupies part of the Town Garage, which is located in a flood plain. He felt that it was unwise to store thousands of dollars worth of medical equipment where it might be subject to water damage (as happened with Tropical Storm Irene).

Since each of the emergency services (Fire, Police, and Ambulance) either had a fairly new structure or one now was being considered, Fire Chief Peter J. DeMasi asked if there were any current thought to addressing the deficiencies of the Municipal Building. Chair Quinn said that the current structure seems to be adequate for the time being. There was the hope that the Northfield Savings Bank (NSB) would purchase the building for additional office space (thus partially funding construction of a new municipal building elsewhere) but this hope ended when NSB recently announced its decision to build new corporate headquarters in Berlin.

There being no other questions or comments, the Public Hearing was closed at 6:10 p.m. The regular meeting began immediately.

- II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE.** The Board members and the public were asked to rise and recite the Pledge of Allegiance.

- III. SET/ADJUST AGENDA.** Manager Lewis noted that since the warned executive session is not needed tonight, it will be deleted from the agenda.

**IV. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

- a. Heidi Reisedorff, G & K Services: Municipal Employee Uniforms Bid Proposal.** Ms. Reisedorff's company submitted a bid proposal to provide and maintain uniforms for the Highway Department as well as the Water and Sewer Departments. She asked if the Board members had any questions regarding G & K Services and/or its proposal. Manager Lewis asked if G & K Services provided uniform services to any other businesses in the area. Ms. Reisedorff stated that Norwich University (NU) has been a customer for over ten (10) years; at that time, G & K Services purchased the uniform company (All-Tex) with an existing contract with NU. Manager Lewis noted that the total annual cost in G & K Services' proposal was \$7442.44. He asked what services this covered. Ms. Reisedorff stated that this amount included new uniforms, all laundering, all repairs (big and small), complete loss damage, etc. She added that all items that were too damaged to be properly mended would be replaced. Manager Lewis asked about embroidery (i.e., "Town of Northfield") and name tags. Ms. Reisedorff stated that there would be no additional charge at the beginning of the contract. There would be separate charges later when this had to be done to accommodate new employees, etc.

Manager Lewis then asked about the durability of the uniform material. Ms. Reisedorff stated that it was heavy cotton that was specially designed for the uniform industry and also is designed to resist soiling. Manager Lewis stated that a constant problem with the current uniform supplier (Foley Services) is that uniforms often come back from servicing still dirty. He asked if G & K Services had similar issues. Ms. Reisedorff said that her company uses specific laundering chemicals for specific garments. She added that most uniforms required heavy duty detergent. Chair Quinn asked if the uniforms that G & K Services would provide are comparable to those now in service. Manager Lewis confirmed that they were. He added that the written information provided by G & K Services with its bid proposal was shared with Highway Superintendent Peter G. DeMasi. In addition, Ms. Reisedorff personally came to the Town Garage to speak to the employees regarding their concerns. Selectman Bradley asked how many municipal governments currently were contracted with G & K Services. Ms. Reisedorff estimated between fifteen (15) and twenty (20) as well as the State of Vermont's numerous maintenance garages. Selectman Gadbois asked if the weekly delivery of five (5) laundered uniforms was for each employee. Ms. Reisedorff confirmed that each of the eleven (11) municipal employees would receive five (5) sets of clean uniforms each week. Selectman Goslant noted that when the uniform contract was first put out to bid last July, G & K Services' bid amount then was about three hundred dollars (\$300) higher than its current proposal; why the reduced price? Ms. Reisedorff said that she worked with her office manager to reduce uniform protection costs.

- b. **Eric LaChance, Sales Manager, UniFirst Corp.: Municipal Employee Uniforms Bid Proposal.** Mr. LaChance also had been invited by Manager Lewis to explain his company's bid proposal but was not present.

#### V. DEPARTMENT HEAD REPORT

- a. **Chief James Dziobek, Northfield Police Department.** Before summarizing his written report, Chief Dziobek wanted to address some recent complaints regarding alleged excessive speed employed by patrol vehicles responding to an emergency (i.e., "code blue" response). He stated that the Northfield Police Department (NPD) is part of a nationwide program that seeks to decrease the number of police officers killed each year during emergency responses. However, due to the five (5) recent complaints received, the current NPD training will be reviewed as soon as possible. He added that officers found to have used excessive speed would be subject to punitive action, including suspension. Chief Dziobek said that high speed responses are an occupational hazard and any problems often are the result of insufficient training and/or officer inexperience. He wanted to assure the public that the NPD is aware of their concerns and that this matter will be addressed. Selectman Goslant said that past NPD chiefs have promised to fix this problem but it has managed to persist over the years. Chair Quinn noted that the NPD has been very responsive to complaints from Northfield residents. Selectman Bradley asked if it were the police dispatchers who request "code blue" responses. Chief Dziobek said that the responding officer makes that determination based on the information provided by the dispatcher. He believes that their overall judgment has been good.

Chief Dziobek then summarized his written report, which was in the form of answers to seven (7) questions posed by Manager Lewis regarding such budget issues as staffing; part-time and overtime hours; cruiser status; etc. He asked if the Board members needed any clarification or had other questions. Chair Quinn asked if the remaining full-time officer vacancy has been advertised and if any certified officers had applied. Chief Dziobek stated that he has had applications from certified officers but he did not feel that any of them were a good match for Northfield. He said that this is the reason that the NPD usually hires applicants who are going through Police Academy training. Chair Quinn asked how much it cost the Town to send an officer to the academy, how much it cost to cover that officer's shift with part-time or overtime hours, etc. Manager Lewis will get that information.

Selectman Gadbois asked how many full-time officers does Northfield need. Chief Dziobek replied that it would be more precise to ask how many full-time officers the Northfield community would support. The FBI recommends that municipalities have two and one-half (2½) officers for every one thousand (1000) residents. That would mean fifteen (15) officers for a town the size of Northfield. Chief Dziobek noted that NPD coverage is through two (2) twelve (12) hour shifts with three (3) officers each. This number is supplemented during special weekends, etc.

Selectman Goslant asked if there was a serious speeding problem on Vermont Route 64. Chief Dziobek stated that although some people do drive too fast on that road, he did not think that it had special problems. Chair Quinn asked which vehicle Chief Dziobek would like to be designated as the part-time detective's car. Chief Dziobek felt that the Impala would be best as it is in the worse condition and not fit to be a patrol vehicle. Selectman Goslant asked for the typical number of response requests received by the NPD. Chief Dziobek said that there were eighty-one (81) calls in September and about 1750 for the year to date. This projects to just over two thousand (2000) for 2013, which would be slightly more than last year. He added that there is not a lot of "serious crime" in Northfield and that the NPD has done a good job in addressing burglaries compared to other parts of the state. Chair Quinn asked about the total number of burglaries this past year and how many were solved. Chief Dziobek will forward those numbers.

Selectman Goslant asked about the recent bid process for a new police cruiser. Chief Dziobek said that the bid proposals received ranged from \$25,000 (state bid) to \$40,000. The amount sometimes reflected the extent of the "police package" included. It costs an additional \$8500 to fully equip a police cruiser. There is about \$5000 in grant monies to partially cover this expense. Chair Quinn thanked Chief Dziobek for his report.

**VI. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

- a. **September 24, 2013, 2013 (Joint Board Meeting).** Motion by Selectman Bradley, seconded by Selectman Goslant, to approve the minutes. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

**VII. APPROVAL OF BILLS**

- a. **Warrant #08-14.** Motion by Selectman Bradley, seconded by Selectman Goslant, to approve Warrant #08-14 in the amount of \$130,660.84. Selectman Bradley is still concerned about the amount of electricity consumed by the Brown Public Library and the Municipal Pool. Chair Quinn noted that at the Joint Board Retreat, there was a recommendation to perform energy audits of the municipal buildings. Selectman Goslant noted \$5000 spent in purchasing new culverts. Highway Foreman Ray Hudson stated that most of these culverts were used on Forest Road and covered by grant money. The rest went into inventory for future use. Selectman Goslant asked about a steel beam purchased for a bridge on the Chamberlin Road. Manager Lewis stated that this was an expected bridge maintenance expense that was budgeted out of operating expenses. Selectman Gadbois asked about a radar unit purchased by the NPD. Manager Lewis stated that this cost was paid for out of grant money. Selectman Gadbois asked why cell phone charges still were so expensive. Manager Lewis said that the new, less expensive cell phone plan obtained by Ambulance Supervisor James Baraw was not in effect when these invoices were generated. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**
- b. **Approval of Bi-Weekly Payroll through September 29, 2013.** Motion by Selectman Bradley, seconded by Selectman Goslant, to approve the bi-weekly payroll in the amount of \$67,030.92. Selectman Gadbois asked why NPD part-time expenses were so high for this pay period. Manager Lewis will check into this. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

**VIII. SELECT BOARD**

- a. **Awarding of Contract for Supply/Maintenance of Municipal Employee Uniforms.** Manager Lewis recommends to the Board members that this contract be awarded to the low bidder, G & K Services, for an annual cost of \$7642.44. Motion by Selectman Denny, seconded by Selectman Gadbois, to award the uniform supply and maintenance contract to G & K Services. Selectman Gadbois asked what problems there were with the current vendor (Foley Services). Manager Lewis said that the uniforms were of poor quality, the uniform maintenance (i.e., cleaning, repairing, replacement, etc.) was not good, etc. He added that he tried to work with Foley Services over the past two (2) years to resolve these problems but there never was any improvement. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**
- b. **Approval of Special Town Meeting Warning: Tuesday, November 19, 2013.** Motion by Selectman Denny, seconded by Selectman Goslant, to approve and sign the warning for an Australian Ballot election that would seek voter authorization for Northfield to leave the Mad River Resource Management Alliance (MRRMA) and rejoin the Central Vermont Solid Waste Management District (CVSWMD) beginning January 1, 2014. Manager Lewis stated that this vote would be preceded by two (2) Public Hearings on October 28, 2013 and November 12, 2013. Selectman Goslant noted that Ruth Ruttenberg, who serves as Northfield's MRRMA representative sent the Board an email with various concerns regarding the proposed switch; has Manager Lewis addressed these with her? Manager Lewis believes that all questions would be best addressed during the public hearings. He added that the voters of Northfield would be making the final decision in this matter. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**
- c. **Vermont Agency of Transportation (AOT) Report Receipt Request.** Manager Lewis said that the AOT recently sent a letter asking that the Select Board confirm the Town's intention to address structural problems on a bridge on Chamberlin Road (Bridge #50). The bridge already has been repaired and he would like the Board to approve and sign the confirmation form. **Without objection, the Board members approved and signed the AOT form.**
- d. **Approval of Letter to One-, Two-, and Three-House Road Residents.** As requested, Manager Lewis revised the draft letter discussed at the last Board meeting (09/24/13). This letter would ask residents of roads with three (3) or fewer houses if they would be willing to have their roads privatized ("thrown up") or reclassified. Manager Lewis had looked into possible implications to property tax valuations and found none. The letter was rewritten to emphasize that the Town was only gathering information at this time and there was no intention to impose anything on unwilling residents. Selectman Denny remains concerned about this letter's impact on residents of three-house roads that were built to Town standards. He believes that the letter will cast aspersions on roads that were properly built. Selectman Denny thought that there should be some distinction between the three-house roads that met the approved road standards and those that did not. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

- e. **Appointment to Fill Zoning Board of Adjustment (ZBA) Vacancy.** Chair Quinn noted that Michael Bailey, a Pearl Street resident, has expressed his interest in serving on the ZBA. Mr. Bailey attended the last ZBA meeting (09/26/13) and after his interview, the ZBA recommended that the Select Board formally appoint Mr. Bailey. Motion by Selectman Bradley, seconded by Selectman Goslant, to appoint Michael Bailey to the ZBA vacancy. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**
  - f. **Authorization to Sell Used Sandpiper (i.e., Sand Screen).** Manager Lewis stated that this particular piece of equipment has been sitting idle in the sand pit for a number of years. It seems to have some value so he would like the Board's authorization to sell it to the highest bidder. If it turns out that there is interest, it can be sold for scrap. Motion by Selectman Denny, seconded by Selectman Bradley, to authorize selling the sand screen through the bid process. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**
  - g. **Joint Board Meeting.** The next joint meeting with the Village Trustees will be held on Monday, October 28, 2013 starting at 6:00 p.m.
  - h. **Status Reports: Various Projects**
    - 1. **Town/Village Merger Transition.** Selectman Denny reported that the committee met last week (10/09/13) and approved the wording of an amendment pertaining to the Town Manager Form of Government. The expansion and contraction of the combined post-merger Select Board specified in the approved Merger Plan also was reviewed and found to be appropriate. There have been some disagreements regarding the role of the new utility commissions but Selectman Denny believed that a committee recommendation should be ready soon.
- IX. MANAGER'S REPORT.** Manager Lewis apologized for the brevity of his written report as most of his time recently has been focused on union negotiations and employee health insurance issues. He did have some updates.
- a. **Salt Shed.** Manager Lewis reported that construction of the new salt shed was completed today.
  - b. **Union Contract Negotiations.** Manager Lewis said that he has been working on obtaining a new agreement but it has been a long process.
  - c. **Forest Road.** Chair Quinn noted that money was put into the Town Highway budget to address drainage issues on this road. Since the recent project was paid for with grant monies, he asked what would happen to the budgeted funds. Manager Lewis said that unless these funds were designated by Northfield voters to be used only on Forest Road, they could be redistributed and used for other roadwork.
- X. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:** Non-agenda items
- a. **Linda Barrows: Plugged Ditch and Culvert.** Ms. Barrows stated that the culvert above her property on Barrows Road has not been cleaned out this summer. This has caused some property erosion following some heavy rains. The Highway Department did clear out the ditch on her property last week but the culvert was not. This resulted in a new ditch forming due to recent rainstorms. Ms. Barrows would like the culvert cleaned out and the ditch done properly. Selectman Bradley has no objection to the culvert being addressed but is unsure as to the Town's obligation to work on a ditch located on private property. Ms. Barrows said that the Town Highway always maintained both the culvert and ditch in the past. Manager Lewis said that he and Highway Superintendent DeMasi will personally meet with Ms. Barrows on site tomorrow morning to resolve this matter.
- XI. ADJOURNMENT.** Motion by Selectman Bradley, seconded by Selectman Goslant, to adjourn. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**
- The Board adjourned at 7:55 p.m.  
Respectfully submitted,  
*Kenneth L. McCann*  
Kenneth L. McCann, Acting Clerk  
These minutes are subject to approval at the next regular meeting.  
An audio recording of this meeting is available in the Town Manager's Office.